
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5442

AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE-ADMINISTERED GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

SUMMARY:

This bill makes several changes to the State Administered General Assistance (SAGA) program, which, under the law, provides cash assistance to (1) childless adults unable to work for medical reasons and (2) families that do not qualify for other state assistance.

The bill gives the Department of Social Services (DSS) discretion to set certain SAGA assistance rates by eliminating requirements that (1) the SAGA payment standards for families equal 73% of the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program standard of need in effect on June 30, 1995 and (2) a family eligible for SAGA receive \$50 less than the standard assistance the family would receive under the Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) program (which succeeded AFDC).

It also (1) makes ineligible for SAGA benefits a person who is under age 18 and a member of a family eligible for SAGA benefits and (2) establishes a \$500 asset cap for married couples receiving SAGA. By law, the asset cap for an individual is \$250.

The bill also limits the amount of benefits a person can receive who is (1) age 18 to 21 and (2) living with his or her family that is receiving TFA benefits. Under current law, such a person would be eligible for SAGA funds in the amount he or she would be eligible for as an individual under TFA. The bill instead limits the amount of SAGA funds such a person may receive to the amount for which he or she would be eligible as a dependent in a family, rather than an individual, receiving TFA funds.

The bill also makes several minor, technical, and conforming

changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2014

BACKGROUND

SAGA and TFA

SAGA initially provided benefits to families who were ineligible for assistance through TFA, the state's version of the federal Temporary and Needy Family (TANF) program. Under former federal TANF eligibility guidelines, families in which the custodian was not biologically related to the children were not eligible for benefits. SAGA provided assistance to those families until the federal eligibility guidelines were expanded to include such families. By law, to be eligible for SAGA, a family must be ineligible for other state assistance programs. Thus, such families are currently ineligible for SAGA benefits. As noted above, SAGA, by law, assists families that do not qualify for these programs and unmarried individuals unable to work for medical reasons.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 18 Nay 0 (03/18/2014)